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GOLDEN AGE

Good Samaritans for city's old folk

One face of Newark that is not so well-publicized is that it is a city of compassion.

Newark takes care of its elderly citizens through the Golden Age Project.

The overall objective of the Golden Age Project is to create, in the social and economically deprived areas of Newark, multi-purposed senior centers which will blend into one operation.

It is an organization that will service the health, employment, housing, educational, recreational and social needs of Newark's 60,000 elderly citizens.

The Newark Senior Citizens Golden Age Project is under the auspices of the Newark Senior Citizens Commission.

The Golden Age Project is a delegate agency of the United Community Corporation and receives its earmarked funds from them.

8 centers

Eight Multi-Purpose Senior Centers strategically located throughout the city, provide essential services to prevent and treat neglect, abuse and exploitation of senior citizens.

Senior citizens attending these centers participate in discussing common problems such as housing, health, welfare and nutrition with a view toward seeking to resolve them.

All of the centers are especially designed to meet the social and recreational needs of the elderly through such stimulating and wholesome activities such as arts and crafts, adult basic education, consumer education, domestic arts, music, painting, trips, film lectures and discussion groups.

The Center participates actively in community planning, organization and programs as they relate to aging in general. There is a great deal of interlocking with numerous other agencies serving the general community.

Health Programs

A multi-phased health test and health screening mobil unit offering chest X-Rays, diabetes and general examination have been made available on a periodic basis to all seniors at the centers. These invaluable services are provided by the Newark Health Department.

The supportive services are made possible through the cooperation and coordination of agencies such as Legal Services, Housing Authority, Chri-ll Service, American Red Cross, Mt. Carmel Guild, SPEEDY (Neighborhood Youth Corp), N.J. Commission for the Blind, Newark Public Library, R.S. V. P., Essex County, City of Newark, Rutgers University, CETA/PEP Man-

power, N.J. College of Dentistry and Medicine, New Jersey State Opera, North Jersey Community Union. They help serve the city's elderly.

Volunteers

One of the most valuable resources is the volunteer services group. In addition to many of the city's senior citizens, members of several suburban churches serve as volunteers in the centers as instructors and tutors working with senior citizens.

The Center services approximately 15,000 elderly citizens per month.

Services have been expanded because of the demand in specific areas.

The Golden Age Project has currently on board six employed by C.E.T.A./P.E.P. program assigned to the Agency. They include a housing specialist, community organizers, field worker and two social workers.

Hot meals

Through Newark's Title VII Nutrition Program, the center serves hot meals to participants at two of its sites. Aside from the Title VIII Program most of the Center's agencies serve a hot meal daily which is planned and served by the Center directors thus providing those with low incomes a nutritionally sound meal.

Besides promoting better health among the elderly through improved nutrition, the program aims to reduce the isolation of old age.

The Golden Age Project has two mini-buses. A project is designed to increase the accessibility of essential social development resources to those senior citizens who cannot reach facilities by public transportation because of age, disability or economic conditions. This transportation system is expected to serve our eight multi-purpose centers.

Director

Director of the "Golden Age Project", Rev. Kelmo C. Porter, Jr., a member of Executive Board of Directors, National Council of Senior Citizens, Washington, D.C.

He is also a member of National Council of the Aging, Inc., Washington, D.C., second Vice President, New Jersey Council of Senior Citizens, and member of New Jersey Gerontological Association, the Board of Directors, Union County Anti-Poverty Agency, and the Board of Directors, Essex County Division on Aging.

No fees are ever charged for any of the Center's services.

"The "Golden Age Project" offers older Americans an opportunity to live their remaining years in dignity," a spokesman said.